
Regional Council Activity Report

March 29, 2006



Executive Director's Report

Recently, MAG hosted a meeting of large Metropolitan Planning Organizations for the four corner states (Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah). This meeting was enlightening to me by reinforcing how far the MAG region has come in creating an organizational structure that delivers a regional transportation plan.

MAG's committee structure includes technical committees, a Management Committee and Regional Council. Not all peer organizations have this structure, but what stands out in the MAG process is the formation of the Transportation Policy Committee. The TPC was a product of the 2002 MAG Governance Committee and the detailed implementation by the MAG Regional Council Transportation Subcommittee. The Transportation Policy Committee represents a "new way of doing business," which provides for regional business representatives to vote on the TPC. This is unique among our peer metropolitan planning organizations and even more unique for being recognized in state law.

I came away from the meeting with a greater appreciation for our Regional Transportation Plan, recognizing that it was an effort that truly reflected the input from local elected officials and the business community.

Another interesting comparison I found among these regions relates to how we implement the Plan. Having 20-year life cycle programs for freeways, transit and streets is not done in other regions. They are working on Transportation Improvement Programs that are usually five years in duration. All MPOs have long-range plans, but 20-year implementation programs are not replicated in other regions. Our commitment to implementing the Plan through 20-year life cycle programs provides certainty in the planning process and gives the region clear direction for our future.

On another note, our relationship with the Arizona Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration is a true partnership, especially when compared with other states. This partnership has created a better transportation system for our citizens. We need to look no further than the implementation of rubberized asphalt to know that we are all working for the greater good of this region. This type of innovation does not exist in our neighboring states.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.



Action Items

Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, March 29, 2006

\$1.5 Million in Closeout Funds Available

Under the process established for the year-end closeout, MAG agencies notify MAG each year of the projects that they wish to defer from the current fiscal year to the following fiscal year, or those with which they do not want to proceed. The funds that are released by these actions are added to the uncommitted funds from the initial closeout and form the majority of the funds that are made available for closeout projects.

This year, approximately \$1.5 million in initial closeout funding is available. Agencies may now identify and submit projects that may be eligible for the newly-available funds. The priorities established for utilizing the funds are based on advancing future year projects, if possible, then adding additional funds to existing projects, and then any other uses. Due to the limited time frame involved, projects that are identified for using closeout funds are, by definition, only considered if they are likely to be able to utilize the funds within the current federal fiscal year. Requests for these funds should be submitted to MAG staff by Friday, April 28, 2006.

MAG staff will review the projects and make estimates of emission reductions for a possible ranking of projects, as appropriate. It is expected that the Transportation Review Committee will take action on the interim list of closeout projects in May, with Management Committee, Transportation Policy Committee and Regional Council action taking place in June 2006. Successful projects will be expected to have completed their respective development process and have the final requests submitted to ADOT for obligation by August 1, 2006.

For more information, please contact Paul Ward, MAG Transportation Programming Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Advancement of Traffic Interchange Approved

The Regional Council approved a City of Phoenix request to advance the I-17/Dove Valley Road traffic interchange project. The request to advance the construction by about 15 years was made to coincide with the widening of I-17 in FY 2007. The city will provide the funding for the acceleration of the project, with repayment as provided in the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Life Cycle Program.

For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, (602) 254-6300.

Council Approves TIP Amendment

The Regional Council approved an amendment to the FY 2006-2010 MAG Transportation Improvement Program to add six projects, including a bridge scour project in Phoenix using bridge replacement funds, two locally-funded ITS design projects in Mesa, two new transit projects for Avondale and Valley Metro funded through transit operating funds, and one new transit project in Tempe funded through transit capital funds.

For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, (602) 254-6300.

Air Quality Consultations

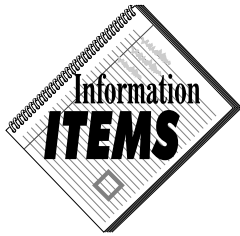
Federal and state environmental regulations require that MAG consult with federal, state and local air quality and transportation agencies on proposed projects or processes that could impact air quality. MAG is currently conducting three such consultations. The first involves distributing for comment the proposed processes to be applied in the upcoming conformity analysis for the FY 2007-2011 MAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Regional Transportation Plan 2006 Update. The second is consultation on a list of Potentially Regionally Significant Projects for the same TIP referenced above. The final consultation is a conformity assessment for an amendment to the FY 2006-2010 MAG TIP involving six new projects (*see above item*).

For more information, please contact Lindy Bauer, MAG Environmental Director, (602) 254-6300.

Killian Recommended to Fill TPC Vacancy

Regional Council members voted to forward the name of Mark Killian, former Speaker of the House of Representatives and partner/vice president of the Killian Company/Sunny Mesa Incorporated, to fill a business representative vacancy on the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC). On March 15, 2006, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors appointed Representative Chuck Gray to fill the vacant Senate seat for District 19, due to the unexpected passing of Senator Marilyn Jarrett. The appointment created a vacancy in the House of Representatives, which the board filled by appointing Kirk Adams, making Mr. Adams ineligible to continue his service on the TPC. According to state law, the Chairman of the Regional Planning Agency may submit names to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House for consideration for appointment to the TPC. Mr. Killian's name was forwarded upon unanimous consent of the Regional Council.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.



Information Items

2005 Census Survey Update

Preliminary results of the 2005 Census Survey have been distributed to member agencies. These numbers are draft numbers that are subject to change. Member agencies have until April 14, 2006 to submit a letter to the Census Bureau stating any questions regarding their total resident population, total housing units, and/or occupancy rate. Preliminary results indicated a September 1, 2005 total population estimate for Maricopa County of 3,507,573.

For more information, please contact Rita Walton, MAG Information Services Manager, (602) 254-6300.



Upcoming Events

Next Regional Council Meeting

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council is scheduled for Wednesday, April 26, 2006 at the MAG Offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Suite 200, Phoenix. Agenda items are expected to include a request to forward a priority listing of applicants for FTA Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Transportation Program to the Arizona Department of Transportation; discussion of priorities for utilizing MAG federal funds that become available through the FY 2006 closeout process; recommended approval of the 2006 MAG Regional Human Services Plan; an update on the Department of Housing and Urban Development Stuart B. McKinney Continuum of Care Consolidated Application Process for Maricopa County; a resolution on funding for permanent supportive housing and services; an update on the 2005 Census Survey; recommended approval of the material cost increases for projects in FY 2006; recommended approval of the proposal to accelerate the widening of I-10 from Loop 101 to the vicinity of the I-10/L303 junction in the West Valley; a summary of input received during the FY 2006 MAG Mid-Phase Public Input Opportunity; recommended approval of the Draft FY 2007-2011 MAG Transportation Improvement Program and Draft MAG Regional Transportation Plan 2006 Update for air quality conformity analyses; an update on the Regional Governmental Service Center; and a discussion and update on the Draft FY 2007 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.